

CLAIMS

1. A system for transmitting information in a broadcast distribution system that is targeted to a system user comprising:

5 a) a network headend for transmitting at least one information stream to a plurality of users, said information stream being comprised of a plurality of information selections and a plurality of corresponding codes, each said code identifying a characteristic of a corresponding one of said selections that is employed to identify a system user to whom either said selection should be transmitted, or additional information should be transmitted;

10 b) a distribution network for transmitting said information stream with said codes;

15 c) a plurality of terminal devices interfaced to said distribution network for receiving said information stream, each said terminal device including a terminal processor and a user demographic database that contains demographic information about a corresponding user of said terminal device, said terminal processor being programmed to compare each code for each selection in said information stream with said demographic information in said database, and determine there from whether said user is designated to receive said selection or additional information.

20 2. The system of claim 1, wherein said headend further includes an encoder for generating said codes, and inserting said codes into said information stream, one each before a corresponding one of said selections.

25 3. The system of claim 1, wherein said information stream is a video information stream, said broadcast distribution system is a cable television distribution system, and said terminal devices are each a set top converter box.

30 4. The system of claim 3, wherein said information selections include advertisements.

35 5. The system of claim 1, wherein said terminal processor is further programmed to provide a prompt to a corresponding user if said processor determines that said user is

designated to receive said additional information.

6. The system of claim 5, wherein said headend further includes a database containing said additional information that is to be made available to selected system users,
5 based on the demographic information in the user demographic database.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein said headend includes a multiplexer for simultaneously transmitting a plurality of said information streams on a plurality of corresponding downstream channels that are interfaced between said distribution network
10 and said terminal devices, each said information stream including information selections that are targeted to different user demographics, and said terminal processor in each said terminal is programmed to determine a selected one of said downstream channels on which a selected information selection targeted to a user of said terminal device is to be received, and access said selected information selection.

15 8. The system of claim 7, wherein said terminal device further includes a tuner for selecting a one of said downstream channels to receive, and said terminal processor is further programmed to instruct said tuner to tune to said selected one of said downstream channels to receive said selected information selection.

20 9. The system of claim 8, wherein said terminal processor is further programmed to instruct said tuner to tune back to a previously selected channel after a designated one of said selections has been received.

25 10. The system of claim 7, wherein said information streams include at least one group of information selections, each selection of which is simultaneously transmitted with the other selections in said group, and is targeted to users having different demographics than those of users to which the other selections in said group are targeted.

30 11. The system of claim 10, wherein said headend further includes an insertion module for inserting said groups of information selections into said information streams.

12. The system of claim 10, wherein each information selection in said groups comprises an advertisement.

5 13. The system of claim 11, wherein each information selection is transmitted in a different PID of a common digital channel.

14. A method for transmitting information in a broadcast distribution system that is targeted to a system user comprising:

10 a) providing at least one information stream in a network headend, said information stream being comprised of a plurality of information selections and a plurality of corresponding codes, each said code identifying a characteristic of a corresponding one of said selections that is employed to identify a system user to whom either said selection should be transmitted, or additional information should be transmitted;

15 b) transmitting said at least one information stream to a plurality of terminal devices, each said terminal device including a terminal processor and a user demographic database that contains demographic information about a corresponding user of said terminal device; and

20 c) employing said terminal processor to compare each code for each selection in said information stream with said demographic information in said database, and determine there from whether said user is designated to receive said selection or additional information.

25 15. The method of claim 14, wherein said codes are inserted in said at least one information stream by an encoder in said headend. The step of providing at least one information stream further comprises obtaining a first information stream and encoding said first information stream with said codes to form said at least one information stream generating said codes, and inserting said codes into said information stream, one each before a corresponding one of said selections.

30

16. The method of claim 14, wherein said information stream is a video

information stream, said broadcast distribution system is a cable television distribution system, and said terminal devices are each a set top converter box.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein said information selections include
5 advertisements.

18. The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of providing a prompt to a corresponding user if said terminal processor determines that said user is designated to receive said additional information.

10

19. The method of claim 18, further comprising the step of transmitting said additional information from a database in said headend.

15
20
25
30

20. The method of claim 1, wherein said step of transmitting further comprises:

1) multiplexing a plurality of said information streams and simultaneously transmitting said plurality of information streams, each said information stream including information selections that are targeted to different user demographics;

2) determining with said terminal processor a selected one of said information selections that is targeted to a user of said terminal device; and

3) accessing said selected one of said information selections from said information stream.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein said terminal device further includes a tuner for selecting a one of said downstream channels to receive, and said step of accessing further comprises instructing said tuner with said terminal processor to tune to said selected one of said downstream channels to receive said selected information selection.

22. The method of claim 21, further comprising the step of instructing said tuner with said terminal processor to tune back to a previously selected channel after a designated one of said selections has been received.

23. The method of claim 20, wherein said information streams include at least one group of information selections, each selection of which is simultaneously transmitted with the other selections in said group, and is targeted to users having different demographics than those of users to which the other selections in said group are targeted.

5

24. The method of claim 20, wherein each information selection in said group is transmitted in a different PID of a common digital channel.

10

11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
99
100
101
102
103
104
105
106
107
108
109
110
111
112
113
114
115
116
117
118
119
120
121
122
123
124
125
126
127
128
129
130
131
132
133
134
135
136
137
138
139
140
141
142
143
144
145
146
147
148
149
150
151
152
153
154
155
156
157
158
159
160
161
162
163
164
165
166
167
168
169
170
171
172
173
174
175
176
177
178
179
180
181
182
183
184
185
186
187
188
189
190
191
192
193
194
195
196
197
198
199
200
201
202
203
204
205
206
207
208
209
210
211
212
213
214
215
216
217
218
219
220
221
222
223
224
225
226
227
228
229
230
231
232
233
234
235
236
237
238
239
2310
2311
2312
2313
2314
2315
2316
2317
2318
2319
2320
2321
2322
2323
2324
2325
2326
2327
2328
2329
2330
2331
2332
2333
2334
2335
2336
2337
2338
2339
2340
2341
2342
2343
2344
2345
2346
2347
2348
2349
2350
2351
2352
2353
2354
2355
2356
2357
2358
2359
2360
2361
2362
2363
2364
2365
2366
2367
2368
2369
2370
2371
2372
2373
2374
2375
2376
2377
2378
2379
2380
2381
2382
2383
2384
2385
2386
2387
2388
2389
2390
2391
2392
2393
2394
2395
2396
2397
2398
2399
23910
23911
23912
23913
23914
23915
23916
23917
23918
23919
23920
23921
23922
23923
23924
23925
23926
23927
23928
23929
23930
23931
23932
23933
23934
23935
23936
23937
23938
23939
23940
23941
23942
23943
23944
23945
23946
23947
23948
23949
23950
23951
23952
23953
23954
23955
23956
23957
23958
23959
23960
23961
23962
23963
23964
23965
23966
23967
23968
23969
23970
23971
23972
23973
23974
23975
23976
23977
23978
23979
23980
23981
23982
23983
23984
23985
23986
23987
23988
23989
23990
23991
23992
23993
23994
23995
23996
23997
23998
23999
239100
239101
239102
239103
239104
239105
239106
239107
239108
239109
239110
239111
239112
239113
239114
239115
239116
239117
239118
239119
239120
239121
239122
239123
239124
239125
239126
239127
239128
239129
239130
239131
239132
239133
239134
239135
239136
239137
239138
239139
239140
239141
239142
239143
239144
239145
239146
239147
239148
239149
239150
239151
239152
239153
239154
239155
239156
239157
239158
239159
239160
239161
239162
239163
239164
239165
239166
239167
239168
239169
239170
239171
239172
239173
239174
239175
239176
239177
239178
239179
239180
239181
239182
239183
239184
239185
239186
239187
239188
239189
239190
239191
239192
239193
239194
239195
239196
239197
239198
239199
2391910
2391911
2391912
2391913
2391914
2391915
2391916
2391917
2391918
2391919
2391920
2391921
2391922
2391923
2391924
2391925
2391926
2391927
2391928
2391929
23919210
23919211
23919212
23919213
23919214
23919215
23919216
23919217
23919218
23919219
23919220
23919221
23919222
23919223
23919224
23919225
23919226
23919227
23919228
23919229
23919230
23919231
23919232
23919233
23919234
23919235
23919236
23919237
23919238
23919239
23919240
23919241
23919242
23919243
23919244
23919245
23919246
23919247
23919248
23919249
23919250
23919251
23919252
23919253
23919254
23919255
23919256
23919257
23919258
23919259
23919260
23919261
23919262
23919263
23919264
23919265
23919266
23919267
23919268
23919269
23919270
23919271
23919272
23919273
23919274
23919275
23919276
23919277
23919278
23919279
23919280
23919281
23919282
23919283
23919284
23919285
23919286
23919287
23919288
23919289
23919290
23919291
23919292
23919293
23919294
23919295
23919296
23919297
23919298
23919299
239192100
239192101
239192102
239192103
239192104
239192105
239192106
239192107
239192108
239192109
239192110
239192111
239192112
239192113
239192114
239192115
239192116
239192117
239192118
239192119
239192120
239192121
239192122
239192123
239192124
239192125
239192126
239192127
239192128
239192129
239192130
239192131
239192132
239192133
239192134
239192135
239192136
239192137
239192138
239192139
239192140
239192141
239192142
239192143
239192144
239192145
239192146
239192147
239192148
239192149
239192150
239192151
239192152
239192153
239192154
239192155
239192156
239192157
239192158
239192159
239192160
239192161
239192162
239192163
239192164
239192165
239192166
239192167
239192168
239192169
239192170
239192171
239192172
239192173
239192174
239192175
239192176
239192177
239192178
239192179
239192180
239192181
239192182
239192183
239192184
239192185
239192186
239192187
239192188
239192189
239192190
239192191
239192192
239192193
239192194
239192195
239192196
239192197
239192198
239192199
239192200
239192201
239192202
239192203
239192204
239192205
239192206
239192207
239192208
239192209
239192210
239192211
239192212
239192213
239192214
239192215
239192216
239192217
239192218
239192219
239192220
239192221
239192222
239192223
239192224
239192225
239192226
239192227
239192228
239192229
239192230
239192231
239192232
239192233
239192234
239192235
239192236
239192237
239192238
239192239
239192240
239192241
239192242
239192243
239192244
239192245
239192246
239192247
239192248
239192249
239192250
239192251
239192252
239192253
239192254
239192255
239192256
239192257
239192258
239192259
239192260
239192261
239192262
239192263
239192264
239192265
239192266
239192267
239192268
239192269
239192270
239192271
239192272
239192273
239192274
239192275
239192276
239192277
239192278
239192279
239192280
239192281
239192282
239192283
239192284
239192285
239192286
239192287
239192288
239192289
239192290
239192291
239192292
239192293
239192294
239192295
239192296
239192297
239192298
239192299
2391922100
2391922101
2391922102
2391922103
2391922104
2391922105
2391922106
2391922107
2391922108
2391922109
2391922110
2391922111
2391922112
2391922113
2391922114
2391922115
2391922116
2391922117
2391922118
2391922119
2391922120
2391922121
2391922122
2391922123
2391922124
2391922125
2391922126
2391922127
2391922128
2391922129
2391922130
2391922131
2391922132
2391922133
2391922134
2391922135
2391922136
2391922137
2391922138
2391922139
2391922140
2391922141
2391922142
2391922143
2391922144
2391922145
2391922146
2391922147
2391922148
2391922149
2391922150
2391922151
2391922152
2391922153
2391922154
2391922155
2391922156
2391922157
2391922158
2391922159
2391922160
2391922161
2391922162
2391922163
2391922164
2391922165
2391922166
2391922167
2391922168
2391922169
2391922170
2391922171
2391922172
2391922173
2391922174
2391922175
2391922176
2391922177
2391922178
2391922179
2391922180
2391922181
2391922182
2391922183
2391922184
2391922185
2391922186
2391922187
2391922188
2391922189
2391922190
2391922191
2391922192
2391922193
2391922194
2391922195
2391922196
2391922197
2391922198
2391922199
2391922200
2391922201
2391922202
2391922203
2391922204
2391922205
2391922206
2391922207
2391922208
2391922209
2391922210
2391922211
2391922212
2391922213
2391922214
2391922215
2391922216
2391922217
2391922218
2391922219
2391922220
2391922221
2391922222
2391922223
2391922224
2391922225
2391922226
2391922227
2391922228
2391922229
2391922230
2391922231
2391922232
2391922233
2391922234
2391922235
2391922236
2391922237
2391922238
2391922239
2391922240
2391922241
2391922242
2391922243
2391922244
2391922245
2391922246
2391922247
2391922248
2391922249
2391922250
2391922251
2391922252
2391922253
2391922254
2391922255
2391922256
2391922257
2391922258
2391922259
2391922260
2391922261
2391922262
2391922263
2391922264
2391922265
2391922266
2391922267
2391922268
2391922269
2391922270
2391922271
2391922272
2391922273
2391922274
2391922275
2391922276
2391922277
2391922278
2391922279
2391922280
2391922281
2391922282
2391922283
2391922284
2391922285
2391922286
2391922287
2391922288
2391922289
2391922290
2391922291
2391922292
2391922293
2391922294
2391922295
2391922296
2391922297
2391922298
2391922299
2391922300
2391922301
2391922302
2391922303
2391922304
2391922305
2391922306
2391922307
2391922308
2391922309
2391922310
2391922311
2391922312
2391922313
2391922314
2391922315
2391922316
2391922317
2391922318
2391922319
2391922320
2391922321
2391922322
2391922323
2391922324
2391922325
2391922326
2391922327
2391922328
2391922329
2391922330
2391922331
2391922332
2391922333
2391922334
2391922335
2391922336
2391922337
2391922338
2391922339
2391922340
2391922341
2391922342
2391922343
2391922344
2391922345
2391922346
2391922347
2391922348
2391922349
2391922350
2391922351
2391922352
2391922353
2391922354
2391922355
2391922356
2391922357
2391922358
2391922359
2391922360
2391922361
2391922362
2391922363
2391922364
2391922365
2391922366
2391922367
2391922368
2391922369
2391922370
2391922371
2391922372
2391922373
2391922374
2391922375
2391922376
2391922377
2391922378
2391922379
2391922380
2391922381
2391922382
2391922383
2391922384
2391922385
2391922386
2391922387
2391922388
2391922389
2391922390
2391922391
2391922392
2391922393
2391922394
2391922395
2391922396
2391922397
2391922398
2391922399
2391922400
2391922401
2391922402
2391922403
2391922404
2391922405
2391922406
2391922407
2391922408
2391922409
2391922410
2391922411
2391922412
2391922413
2391922414
2391922415
2391922416
2391922417
2391922418
2391922419
2391922420
2391922421
2391922422
2391922423
2391922424
2391922425
2391922426
2391922427
2391922428
2391922429
2391922430
2391922431
2391922432
2391922433
2391922434
2391922435
2391922436
2391922437
2391922438
2391922439
2391922440
2391922441
2391922442
2391922443
2391922444
2391922445
2391922446
2391922447
2391922448
2391922449
2391922450
2391922451
2391922452
2391922453
2391922454
2391922455
2391922456
2391922457
2391922458
2391922459
2391922460
2391922461
2391922462
2391922463
2391922464
2391922465
2391922466
2391922467
2391922468
2391922469
2391922470
2391922471
2391922472
2391922473
2391922474
2391922475
2391922476
2391922477
2391922478
2391922479
2391922480
2391922481
2391922482
2391922483
2391922484
2391922485
2391922486
2391922487
2391922488
2391922489
2391922490
2391922491
2391922492
2391922493
2391922494
2391922495
2391922496
2391922497
2391922498
2391922499
2391922500
2391922501
2391922502
2391